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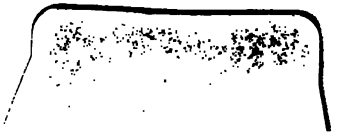

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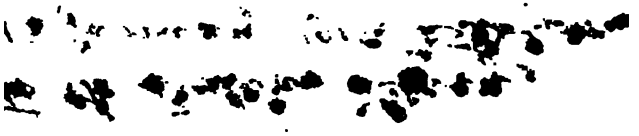

THE

MINOR POEMS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

Thy hands their little force resign,
Yet gently press'd press gently mine,
My Mary.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.

1818.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the present edition of the Minor Poems of Cowper, it will be perceived that some regard has been paid, both to selection and classification. The whole of the Poems hitherto arbitrarily distributed at the end of the first two volumes, with the exception of the Translations and the Latin Poems, together with a copious selection from his posthumous Poetry, (which from its bulk, seems to have been received with less favour by the public than was expected,) are included in this arrangement. The rejected pieces, though they might deserve insertion in a biographical memoir, as illustrative of the Author's character, did not, for the most part, appear to the Editor

worthy of permanently occupying a place among the productions of the Poet. The Translations are omitted for a different reason; as belonging, together with the Homer, to a distinct portion of Cowper's Works. An exception has, however, been made in favour of the elegant Versions of VINCENT BOURNE'S Poems, of which the entire collection will be found in the present volume.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

	Page
Yardley Oak	7
On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture	13
Heroism	18
Friendship	21
Ode to Peace	31
Boadicea, an Ode	32
Ode to Apollo	34
Horace. Book II. Ode X.	35
A Reflection on the foregoing Ode	36
The Rose	37
The Winter Nosegay	38
To the Nightingale	39
The Poplar Field	40
The Shrubbery	41
Human Frailty	42
A Comparison	43
Another to a young Lady	43
Song on Peace	44
Song	45
On the Loss of the Royal George	46
Sonnet to William Wilberforce, Esq.	48

Page

Sonnet to Henry Cowper, Esq. 48
——— to John Johnson 49
——— to William Hayley, Esq. 50
——— to Dr. Austin 50
——— to George Romney, Esq. 51
——— to Mrs. Unwin 52
To Mary 53
On the Death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bulfinch 55
The Poet's New Year's Gift, to Mrs. Throckmorton.. 58
To Mrs. Throckmorton, on her Transcript of Horace 59
Catharina, to Miss Stapleton 60
Catharina, the Second Part 63
Gratitude. To Lady Hesketh 65
To my Cousin Anne Bodham 67
To Mrs. King 68
To Lady Austen 70
On Mrs. Montagu's Feather-hangings 74
To an Afflicted Protestant Lady in France 76
To Joseph Hill, Esq. 78
To the Rev. Mr. Newton 81
To the same 82
To the Rev. W. Cawthorne Unwin 82
To a Young Friend 84
On the Burning of Lord Mansfield's Library 84
On the same 85
On the Promotion of Lord Thurlow 86
The Diverting History of John Gilpin 87
The Yearly Distress 98
On the Queen's Visit to London, 1789 102
Annus Memorabilis, 1789 106

MINOR POEMS.

PART I.

YARDLEY OAK.

[1791.]

Survivor sole, and hardly such, of all
That once liv'd here, thy brethren, at my birth,
(Since which I number threescore winters past)
A shatter'd vet'ran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relics of ages! Could a mind, imbued
With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,
I might with rev'rence kneel, and worship thee.
It seems idolatry with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Lov'd not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscrib'd, as to a refuge, fled.

Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball,
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepar'd
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.
So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
Ye reas'ners broad awake, whose busy search
Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!
Thou fell'st mature; and in the loamy clod
Swelling with vegatative force instinct
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,
Now stars; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact;
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
And, all the elements thy puny growth
Fost'ring propitious, thou becam'st a twig.
Who liv'd, when thou wast such? Oh, couldst thou [speak,
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees
Oracular, I would not curious ask
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.
By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events

Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recov'ring, and mistated setting right—
Desp'rate attempt, till trees shall speak again!
  Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;
And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign; and the num'rous flocks,
That graz'd it, stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe-shelter'd from the storm.
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast out-liv'd
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.
  While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd
Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
Then twig; then sapling; and, as cent'ry roll'd
Slow after century, a giant-bulk
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root
Upheav'd above the soil, and sides emboss'd
With prominent wens globose—till at the last
The rottenness, which time is charg'd to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.
  What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!
Change is the diet, on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—

Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,
Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
Delight in agitation, yet sustain,
The force, that agitates, not unimpair'd;
But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.
Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
From almost nullity into a state
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
Slow, into such magnificent decay.
Time was, when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,
That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the deck
Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,
The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,
Warp'd into tough knee-timber, many a load!*
But the axe spar'd thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
The bottomless demands of contest, wag'd
For senatorial honours. Thus to Time

* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.

The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserv'd,
Achiev'd a labour, which had far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.
  Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems
An huge throat, calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st
The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
A quarry of stout spurs, and knotted fangs,
Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.
  So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet
Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
Pulveriz'd of venality, a shell
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!
  Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some, memorial none, where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force,

Than yonder upstarts of the neighb'ring wood,
So much thy juniors, who their birth receiv'd
Half a millenium since the date of thine.
  But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.
  One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gaz'd,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,
Nor ow'd articulation to his ear;
But, moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties, assign'd
To each his name significant, and, fill'd
With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heav'n
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excus'd the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charg'd his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Lean'd on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

ON HIS

MOTHER'S PICTURE.

O that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I saw thee last.
Those lips are thine.—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solac'd me;——

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY EDWARD PORTBURY.
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY,
OCT.1 1817.

ON THE

RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK.

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANNE BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes,
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it), here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch ev'n then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was—where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,

Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile),

Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast,
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd),
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore
'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,'*
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.

* Garth.

My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By Contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

HEROISM.

THERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire:
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves that girdled her around.
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines),
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
In peace upon her sloping sides matured:
When on a day, like that of the last doom,
A conflagration labouring in her womb,
She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth
That shook the circling seas and solid earth,
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
And hang their horrours in the neighbouring skies,
While through the Stygian veil that blots the day,
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
But oh! what Muse, and in what powers of song,
Can trace the torrent as it burns along?
Havoc and devastation in the van,
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man;
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.
  Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an uninform'd and idle mass;
Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,
Or blade that might redeem it from despair.
Yet Time at length (what will not time achieve?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.

Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
O charming Paradise of short-lived sweets!
The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round,
Brings to the distant year a sullen sound:
Again the mountain feels the imprison'd foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below.
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.
Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence,
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires!
Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbours', and their own.
Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;
At every step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.
Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun;

And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
And Folly pays, resound at your return,
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.
  Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease),
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.
  Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part;
And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, laurell'd heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;
And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
To prove you there destroyers as ye are.
  O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;
Where Power secures what Industry has won:
Where to succeed is not to be undone;
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath á George's reign!

FRIENDSHIP.

Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest.
Cicero.

1782.

WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,
But men unqualified and base
  Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of liberality of heart,
  And dulness of discretion.

If every polish'd gem we find,
Illuminating heart or mind,
  Provoke to imitation;
No wonder Friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
  Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend
The requisites that form a friend,
  A real and a sound one;
Nor any fool he would deceive,
But prove as ready to believe,
  And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
  An errour soon corrected—
For who but learns in riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
  Is most to be suspected?

But here again, a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
  And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
  A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
  Nor is it wise complaining,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
  We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,
That stands on sordid interest,
  Or mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
Between the sot and sensualist,
  For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend, should come disposed
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed
  The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
  Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
  And constantly supported:
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse
Another of sinister views,
  Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice?
It is indeed above all price,
  And must be made the basis;
But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
  All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
  By ceaseless sharp corrosion;
A temper passionate and fierce,
May suddenly your joys disperse
  At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight—
  The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
  And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
  If envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
  But not a friend worth keeping.

As Envy pines at good possess'd,
So Jealousy looks forth distress'd
  On good that seems approaching;
And, if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
  And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
(Unless belied by common fame,)
  Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
  And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With Friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers, will be sure to hear
The trumpet of Contention:
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into dissension.

A friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as the needle to the pole,
Their humour yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
  Plebeians must surrender
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
  Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene,
(As Irish bogs are always green),
  They sleep secure from waking;
And are indeed a bog that bears
Your unparticipated cares
  Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics,
  Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
  A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life;
  But friends that chance to differ
On points which God has left at large,
How freely will they meet and charge!
  No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
  No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend we seem
To adopt the chymist's golden dream,
  With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
  By trespass or omission;
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,
  And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
  And having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
  Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
  That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case
That savour much of common-place,
  And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone,
  To finish a fine building;
The palace were but half complete
If he could possibly forget
  The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
  How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
  To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
  First fixes our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
  Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
'Say little, and hear all you can.'
  Safe policy, but hateful—
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
  Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
Shall find me as reserved as he;
  No subterfuge or pleading
Shall win my confidence again,
I will by no means entertain
  A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
  Of evils yet unmention'd—
May prove the task a task indeed,
In which 'tis much if we succeed,
  However well-intention'd.

Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
  To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
  A principal ingredient.

The noblest friendship ever shown,
The Saviour's history makes known,
  Though some have turn'd and turn'd it;
And whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeing with a biass'd mind,
  Have not, it seems, discern'd it.

O Friendship! if my soul forego
Thy dear delights while here below;
  To mortify and grieve me,
May I myself at last appear
Unworthy, base, and insincere,
  Or may my friend deceive me!

ODE TO PEACE.

COME, peace of mind, delightful guest!
Return and make thy downy nest
  Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view;
  We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,
  And pleasure's fatal wiles?
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
  The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heaven that thou alone canst make?
  And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequester'd shed,
  To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
  Whate'er I loved before;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
  Farewell! we meet no more?

BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods;

Sage beneath a spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrours of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

Other Romans shall arise,
  Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
  Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
  From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
  Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
  Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
  None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
  Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
  Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
  Felt them in her bosom glow:
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died;
  Dying hurl'd them at the foe;

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
  Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestow'd,
  Shame and ruin wait for you.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains,
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;
Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;
Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?
Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow:
Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
Combined with millions more,
To form an Iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.
Illustrious drop? and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot!
Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

HORACE.

BOOK II. ODE X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
  Of adverse Fortune's power:
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep,
  Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
  The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
  Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
  Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capt eminence divide,
  And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
  And hopes in spite of pain:
If Winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
  And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast?
The dark appearance will not last;
  Expect a brighter sky.
The God that strings the silver bow,
Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
  And lays his arrows by.

If hinderances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
  And let thy strength be seen;
But O! if Fortune fill thy sail
With more than a propitious gale,
  Take half thy canvass in.

A REFLECTION
ON
THE FOREGOING ODE.

And is this all? Can Reason do no more
Than bid me shun the deep and dread the shore;
Sweet moralist! afloat on life's rough sea,
The Christian has an art unknown to thee.
He holds no parley with unmanly fears;
Where Duty bids he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

THE ROSE.

This elegant Rose had I shaken it leſs,
Might have bloomed with its owner awhile;
And the tear, that is wip'd with a little addreſs,
May be follow'd perhaps with a ſmile.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL, R.A. ENGRAVED BY EDWARD PORTBURY.
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
OCT. 1.1817.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd,
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile,
And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

WHAT Nature, alas! has denied
To the delicate growth of our isle,
Art has in a measure supplied,
And Winter is deck'd with a smile.
See, Mary, what beauties I bring
From the shelter of that sunny shed,
Where the flowers have the charms of the spring
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
Where Flora is still in her prime,
A fortress, to which she retreats
From the cruel assaults of the clime.
While Earth wears a mantle of snow,
These pinks are as fresh and as gay
As the fairest and sweetest, that blow
On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
The frowns of a sky so severe;
Such Mary's true love, that has lived
Through many a turbulent year.
The charms of the late-blowing rose
Seem graced with a livelier hue,
And the winter of sorrow best shows
The truth of a friend such as you.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1792.

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make e'en January charm,
And every season Spring.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are fell'd, farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonade:
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse in his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I last took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before,
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

Oh, happy shades—to me unbless'd!
Friendly to peace, but not to me!
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if any thing could please.

But fix'd unalterable Care
Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness every where,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While Peace possess'd these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley musing slow;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not like me to nourish wo!

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

HUMAN FRAILTY.

WEAK and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But Passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engages his assent,
But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view;
And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,
To reach the distant coast:
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
Both speed their journey with a restless stream;
The silent pace, with which they steal away,
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;
Alike irrevocable both when past,
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
Though each resemble each in every part,
A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound
How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd!
But Time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng;
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course:
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and bless'd where'er she goes,
Pure-bosom'd as that watery glass,
And Heaven reflected in her face.

SONG ON PEACE.

Air—"*My fond shepherds of late,*" *&c.*

No longer I follow a sound;
  No longer a dream I pursue;
O Happiness! not to be found,
  Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
  In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
  But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
  The voice of true Wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope
  And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
  That seeks it in meekness and love:
But rapture and bliss are confined
  To the glorified spirits above.

SONG.

Air—"*The Lass of Patie's Mill.*"

WHEN all within is peace,
How nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease,
The live-long day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive
And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
Gives nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
Enlivens all it sees;
Can make a wintry sky
Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously array'd
In nature's various robe,
With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
And longs to be at rest.

ON THE

LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED,
SEPT. 1782.

To the March in Scipio.

TOLL for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down,
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

SONNET TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

1792.

'THY country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.
Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
Hope smiles, joy springs, and tho' cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the Just on earth, and all the Blest above.

SONNET TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his Emphatical and Interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq. in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
  Expending late on all that length of plea
  Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
  Both heart and head: and couldst with music sweet
    Of attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
  Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
    Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

SONNET TO JOHN JOHNSON.

On his Presenting me with an Antique Bust of Homer.

1793.

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!
  When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
  The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,
I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.
Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be
  Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward
  With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.
The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine,
  I lose my precious years now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which howsoe'er it shine,
  Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou—like our forefather DONNE,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

SONNET TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

1793.

DEAR architect of fine CHATEAUX in air,
Worthier to stand for ever if they could,
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!

O for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee, (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!

But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they, who need them, use, and then despise.

SONNET TO DR. AUSTIN.

1792.

AUSTIN! accept a grateful verse from me,
The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in my verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
Immortalizing names which else had died.

And oh! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompense his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.
  Friend of my friend! * I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

On his Picture of me in Crayons, drawn at Eartham, in the 61st Year of my Age, in the Months of August and September.

1792.

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace
  On chart or canvas, not the form alone
  And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face—

With strokes that time ought never to erase
  Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own
  The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

* Hayley.

But this I mark—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to Thee?

SONNET TO MRS. UNWIN.

1793.

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings, [drew,
Such aid from Heaven as some have feign'd they
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That ere through age or wo I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.

But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO MARY.

AUTUMN OF 1793.

THE twentieth year is well nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast,
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show,
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

ON

THE DEATH

OF

MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULFINCH.

Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
O share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vine among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle bless'd,
Well-taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large-built and latticed well.

Well-latticed—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long-back'd, long-tail'd, with whiker'd snout,
And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study-door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast-clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—
Ah, muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrours that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE

POET'S NEW-YEAR'S-GIFT.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already bless'd,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliss is bliss divine:
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,
Which Fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd.

TO

MRS. THROCKMORTON.

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE

AD LIBRUM SUUM.

FEBRUARY, 1790.

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd
What honour awaited his ode,
To his own little volume address'd,
The honour which you have bestow'd:
Who have traced it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat,
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,
A nymph shall hereafter arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
The glory your malice denies;
Shall dignity give to my lay,
Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
Nothing ever was written so well.

CATHARINA.

TO MRS. STAPLETON, (NOW MRS. COURTNAY.)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain,
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paused under many a tree,
And much she was charm'd with a tone
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.

The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home,
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam,
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

CATHARINA:

SECOND PART.

On her Marriage to George Courtnay, Esq.

1792.

BELIEVE it or not, as you chuse,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo—she is actually come.

Such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria* would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief, could we view
Catharina the queen of the hall:

* Lady Throckmorton.

And therefore I wish'd as I did,
  And therefore this union of hands;
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
  But all cry—Amen—to the bans.

Since therefore I seem to incur
  No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
  I will e'en to my wishes again—
With one I have made her a wife,
  And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life—
  How soon I can make her a mother.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

1786.

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
Ambitious of brushing the sky:
This cap to my cousin I owe;
She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreathed into an elegant bow,
The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
Contrived both for toil and repose,
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
And rival in lustre of that
In which, or Astronomy lies,
Fair Cassiopeïa sat:

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride!
Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from a cross-country-ride!
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce ;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a boufet,
But what the gods call it above
Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains, that keep the room warm,
Or cool, as the season demands,
Those stoves, that for pattern and form,
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
To one, from our earliest youth
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth;
For Time, the destroyer, declared,
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these;

And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poets' goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

TO MY COUSIN,

ANNE BODHAM,

ON

RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE, MADE BY HERSELF.

1793.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee,
I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem 's too dear
For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
The best things kept within it.

TO MRS. KING.

On her kind Present to the Author, a Patch-work Counterpane of her own making.

1790.

THE Bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call
Both on his heart and head,
To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair
Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
(As Homer's epic shows,)
Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
Without the aid of sun or showers,
For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day
Receives the weary swain,
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groan'd for me!
Should every maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers—
Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle fair,
Who will not come to peck me bare
As bird of borrow'd feather,
And thanks to one, above them all,
The gentle fair of Pertenhall,
Who put the whole together.

TO LADY AUSTEN.

1781.

DEAR ANNA—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news;
What walks we take, what books we chuse;
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.
But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the World, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
Who labour hard to allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching, and that tingling,
With all my purpose intermingling,

To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.
  Mysterious are His ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions;
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.*
Thus Martha, e'en against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,†
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains,
To guess and spell what it contains:

* An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.

† Lady Austen's residence in France.

But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we and our affairs
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads, at length, before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate in vain.
  Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud, descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower?
Just so the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man, tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.

But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.
Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small;
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seem'd to promise no such prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation,)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken;
'A threefold cord is not soon broken.'

ON

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

THE Birds put off their every hue,
To dress a room for Montagu.
The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes;*
The Pheasant plumes, which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The Cock his arch'd tail's azure show;
And, river blanch'd, the Swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.
To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove—

Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile—
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrudes on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright—
Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind—
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar,)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
  She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The Plume and Poet both we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

TO AN

AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY

IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise.
To give the creature the Creator's due,
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by Craft for folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reached that bless'd abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The World may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain;
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread;
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,

In pity to the souls his grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, ' Go spend them in the vale of tears.'
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,
An envious World will interpose its frown
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin;
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around,

TO JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

Dear Joseph—five and twenty years ago—
Alas how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And, were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.
Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.
Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.

Go, fellow !—whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a step, Sir, just at the street's end.—
For what?—An please you, Sir, to see a friend.—
A friend ! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.—
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain,
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed, that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

O happy Britain! we have not to fear,
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

THE swallows in their torpid state
Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost, that binds the stream,
The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,
The gloomy scene surveys;
With present ills his heart must ake,
And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
Bids me and Mary mourn;
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,
Shall chase him from the bowers,
And weave fresh garlands every day,
To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear, that speaks regret,
Of happier times, appear,
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,
Shall shine, and dry the tear.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.—OCTOBER, 1780.

THAT ocean you have late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen,
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep,
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me, the waves that ceaseless broke
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have pass'd,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more.

TO THE REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
The kindness of a friend,
Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
As ever Friendship penn'd,
Thy name omitted in a page,
That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd, as mine with thee,
  Not rashly, nor in sport,
May be as fervent in degree,
  And faithful in its sort,
And may as rich in comfort prove,
As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
  The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
  The stock whereon it grows,
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by Nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
  I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
  Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
  Should be the poet's heart;
Affection lights a brighter flame
  Than ever blazed by art.
No Muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.—1793.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts, to Heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

ON THE

BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY, TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS.

BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase and the gift,
That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
The loss was *his alone;*
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of *his own.*

THE

NEGRO'S COMPLAINT

Hark! he answers — ——— wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder Sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY JOHN ROMNEY,
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
OCT. 1, 1817.

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.——

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and [groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains:
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will;
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd—'Oh no!
What! rob our good neighbour! I pray you don't go;
Besides the man's poor, his orchard's his bread:
Then think of his children, for they must be fed.'

'You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—'I see they will go:
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind would do him no good.

'If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the tree;
But since they will take them, I think I'll go too;
He will lose none by me, though I get a few.'

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan:
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
  Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
  So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd, that, on ocean afloat,
  Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
  And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
  Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
  Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
  Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cried—
  'I go to make freemen of slaves.'—

Then raising her voice to a strain
  The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain
  Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds, which had over us hung,
  Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
  'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a dæmon, her enemy, stood—.
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With the blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which served my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE RETIRED CAT.

A POET's Cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick—
Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould PHILOSOPHIQUE,
Or else she learn'd it of her master.
Sometimes ascending, debonnair,
An apple-tree or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watch'd the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot,
There wanting nothing, save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan
Apparell'd in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.
  But love of change it seems has place
Not only in our wiser race,
Cats also feel, as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing she began to find
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within:

She therefore wish'd, instead of those,
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.
A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the ladies' use,
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there;
Puss with delight beyond expression
Survey'd the scene and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease ere long,
And lull'd by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
By no malignity impell'd,
But all unconscious whom it held.
Awaken'd by the shock, (cried Puss)
'Was ever cat attended thus!
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me,
For soon as I was well composed,
Then came the maid, and it was closed.

How smooth these 'kerchiefs and how sweet!
Oh what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest,
Till Sol declining in the west
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out.'
  The evening came, the sun descended,
And puss remain'd still unattended.
The night roll'd tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day),
The sprightly morn her course renew'd,
The evening grey again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before.
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink or purr'd,
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.
  That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—' What's that?'
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied;
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd
Something imprison'd in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolv'd it should continue there.
At length, a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,

Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him, and dispell'd his fears;
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top.
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Any thing rather than a chest.
Then stepp'd the poet into bed
With this reflection in his head:

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around in all that's done
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation.

THE

LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR,

HYPOCRISY DETECTED.

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
Good mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part express'd,
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarr'd:
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.

Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well—The tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
Renounce the world—the preacher cries.
We do—a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play;
Some love a concert, or a race;
And others shooting and the chace.
Reviled and loved, renounc'd and follow'd;
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd;
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he:
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

THE lady thus address'd her spouse—
What a mere dungeon is this house!
By no means large enough; and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.
Sir Humphry shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.
  You are so deaf, the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)
You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?
  Dismiss poor Harry! he replies;
Some people are more nice than wise,

For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride whip and spur?
'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.
Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl;
I tell you, you can't hear at all!
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something, every day they live,
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all, that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.
The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,

Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives, when that exterior grace
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
Those evils it would gladly cure:
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression,
Shows love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah, if from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead.
The stream polluted, dark and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears:
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear, that they were always able
To hold discourse—at least in fable;
And e'en the child, that knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.
It chanced then on a winter's day,
But warm and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestal sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter, and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bulfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And silence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind:
My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?
Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest;
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow;
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;

Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd in future to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT (or if chance you hold
That title now too trite and old)
A man, once young, who lived retired
As hermit could have well desired,
His hours of study closed at last,
And finish'd his concise repast,
Stoppled his cruse, replaced his book
Within its customary nook,
And, staff in hand, set forth to share
The sober cordial of sweet air,
Like Isaac, with a mind applied
To serious thought at eveningtide.
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees that fringed his hill,
Shades slanting at the close of day
Chill'd more his else delightful way.
Distant a little mile he spied
A western bank's still sunny side,
And right toward the favour'd place
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
In hope to bask a little yet,
Just reach'd it when the sun was set.
  Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
Learns something from whate'er occurs—
And hence, he said, my mind computes
The real worth of man's pursuits.
His object chosen, wealth or fame,
Or other sublunary game,

Imagination to his view
Presents it deck'd with every hue
That can seduce him not to spare
His powers of best exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour, to expend
On so desirable an end.
Ere long approach life's evening shades,
The glow that Fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
That first engaged him in the chase.
True, answer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the senior's side—
But whether all the time it cost
To urge the fruitless chase, be lost,
Must be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there he wins a curse.
But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid, at least in peace of mind,
And sense of having well design'd;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent.
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
And, on her wickerwork high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted,
(A fault philosophers might blame
If quite exempted from the same,)
Enjoy'd at ease the genial day;
'Twas April as the bumpkins say,
The legislature call'd it May.
But suddenly a wind, as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.
But just at eve the blowing weather
And all her fears were hush'd together:
And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
'Tis over, and the brood is safe;
(For ravens, though as birds of omen
They teach both conjurers and old women,
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,

And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found oftenest in what least we dread,
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

THE PINE-APPLE AND BEE.

The pine-apples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow;
A bee of most discerning taste
Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd.
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And search'd for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied;

But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light:
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimm'd his flight another way.
  Methinks, I said, in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the pine-apple, and he
The silly unsuccessful bee.
The maid, who views with pensive air
The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!
  Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch:
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pine-apples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass and cuts his fingers;
But they whom truth and wisdom lead,
Can gather honey from a weed.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

An Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded—
  Ah, hapless wretch! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell;
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease;
But toss'd and buffetted about,
Now *in* the water and now *out*.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against every rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.
  When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there?
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.
  You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,

I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you:
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think!
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't!)
In being touch'd, and crying—Don't!
A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings, in their full amount,
Are all upon your own account.
You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
Save when the knife is at your throat,
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.
And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,

If all the plants that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love;
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.
His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

THE

NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheer'd the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent—

Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the selfsame Power Divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace, both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

THE

DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY R. RHODES.
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
OCT. 1, 1817.

THE

DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
  Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
  I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
  And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs adorn'd with every grace
  That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
  Now starting into sight
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
  With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
  His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
  And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
  To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
  Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a chcrup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd:
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed;

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

ON

A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU,

KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

1793.

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,
Well-fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chased with furious heat,
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since, teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble Man?

BEAU'S REPLY.

SIR, when I flew to seize the bird
In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
And harder to withstand.

You cried—Forbear—but in my breast
A mightier cried—Proceed—
'Twas Nature, Sir, whose strong behest
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as Nature I respect,
I ventured once to break
(As you, perhaps, may recollect),
Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
And panting, press'd the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destined to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
And lick'd the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
My disobedience now,
Nor some reproof yourself refuse
From your aggrieved Bow-wow;

If killing birds be such a crime
(Which I can hardly see),
What think you, Sir, of killing Time
With verse address'd to me?

THE DOVES.

REASONING at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
And heard the voice of love;
The turtle thus address'd her mate,
And soothed the listening dove;

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age:

While innocence without disguise,
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there.

Those ills, that wait on all below,
Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolv'd a union form'd for life,
Death never shall divide.

But oh! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought),
Thou could become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightning from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

THE

LILY AND THE ROSE

This civil bickring and debate
The goddefs chanc'd to hear.
And flew to save, ere yet too late
The pride of the parterre.

DRAWN BY RICHARD WESTALL R.A. ENGRAVED BY J.H.ROBINSON
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THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE green-house is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang, as blithe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never miss'd.

But Nature works in every breast
With force not easily suppress'd;
And Dick felt some desires,
That, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say,
  You must not live alone.—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand,
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
  Return'd him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys
Of friendship, satisfied with noise,
  Fandango, ball, and rout!
Blush, when I tell you how a bird
A prison with a friend preferr'd
  To liberty without.

THE

LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend,
If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end
If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
Appear'd two lovely foes
Aspiring to the rank of queen,
The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd into rage,
And, swelling with disdain,
Appeal'd to many a poet's page,
To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
A fair imperial flower;
She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
The pride of the parterre;

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
And yours the statelier mien!
And, till a third surpasses you,
Let each be deem'd a queen.

Thus, soothed and reconciled, each seeks
The fairest British fair:
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
They reign united there.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perch'd at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
And of a transient date;
For caught, and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs, my little breath
Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill!
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day;
I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On t'other side the Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But O! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we Patriots had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What! hang a man for going mad?
Then farewell British freedom.

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the World knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your Lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then, holding the spectacles up to the court—
Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle
As wide as the ridge of the nose is; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows
With a reasoning, the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side, (as a lawyer knows how),
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes:
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

1791.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanc'd to wage,
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
Had both alike been mild:
But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frown'd oftener than she smiled.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,
Would raise her voice and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The nymphs referr'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judg'd it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the god whom fondly they
Their great inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all.

'Since thus ye have combined,' he said,
'My favourite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
With June's undoubted right,

'The Minx shall, for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ake,
And pinch your noses blue.

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go—Thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
  Aware of wintry storms,
And wood-peckers explore the sides,
  Of rugged oaks for worms;

The sheep here smoothes the knotted thorn
  With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander eve and morn,
  Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah—I could pity thee exiled
  From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styled
  The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
  Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
  Thy prowess—therefore go.

I care not whether east or north,
  So I no more may find thee;
The angry Muse thus sings thee forth,
  And claps the gate behind thee.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn,
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn,
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack;
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes;

For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.
The Sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-raised horns melodious clang
All Kilwick* and all Dinglederry* rang.
Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom press'd
The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.
But when the huntsman with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round
But, recollecting, with a sudden thought, [again;
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

The man to solitude accustom'd long
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees,
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long draught, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all:
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.
This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad sddress'd—
Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.

Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In Earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prison-house below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
And being lost perhaps, and wandering wide,
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear?
Dæmons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd
And fang'd with brass the dæmons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.
  Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.
  How, leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth, how awful! falling there, we burst:
Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small?
For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.

Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of dæmons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.
While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
Through mere good fortune took a different course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terrour in an empty sound
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

ON OBSERVING

SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE,

RECORDED IN

THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

Oh, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age:
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, O illustrious spark!
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!

TRANSLATIONS

FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I. THE GLOW-WORM.

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,
A worm is known to stray,
That shows by night a lucid beam,
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
From whence his rays proceed;
Some give that honour to his tail,
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of Night,
That kindles up the skies,
Gives *him* a modicum of light
Proportiou'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestow'd,
To bid the traveller, as he went,
Be careful where he trod:

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant,—this truth divine
  Is legible and plain,
'Tis power Almighty bids him shine,
  Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
  Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
  And boasts its splendour too.

II. THE JACKDAW.

THERE is a bird, who by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
  Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
  And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
  From what point blows the weather.
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
  He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
  And thence securely sees
The bustle and the rareeshow
That occupy mankind below,
  Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
  If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
  Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great round-about,
The world, with all its motley rout,
  Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its businesses,
Is no concern at all of his,
  And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
  And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
  And such a head between 'em.

III. THE CRICKET.

Little inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be express'd,
Inoffensive welcome guest!
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best;
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Form'd as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpair'd, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night nor dawn of day
Puts a period to thy play:
Sing then—and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man.
Wretched man, whose years are spent
In repining discontent,
Lives not, aged though he be,
Half a span, compared with thee.

IV. THE PARROT.

In painted plumes superbly dress'd,
A native of the gorgeous East,
By many a billow toss'd;
Poll gains at length the British shore,
Part of the captain's precious store,
A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferr'd,
To teach him now and then a word,
As Poll can master it;
But 'tis her own important charge
To qualify him more at large,
And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll! his doting mistress cries,
Sweet Poll! the mimic bird replies,
And calls aloud for sack.
She next instructs him in the kiss;
'Tis now a little one, like Miss,
And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears,
And, listening close with both his ears,
  Just catches at the sound;
But soon articulates aloud,
Much to the amusement of the crowd,
  And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
His humorous talent next employs;
  He scolds, and gives the lie.
And now he sings, and now is sick—
Here, Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
  Poor Poll is like to die!

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
To meet with such a well-match'd pair,
  The language and the tone,
Each character in every part
Sustain'd with so much grace and art,
  And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,
And stammer out a syllable,
  We think them tedious creatures
But difficulties soon abate,
When birds are to be taught to prate,
  And women are the teachers.

V. RECIPROCAL KINDNESS.

THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

ANDROCLES, from his injured lord in dread
Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled.
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parch'd with heat,
He spied, at length, a cavern's cool retreat;
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
When, hugest of his kind, a lion came:
He roar'd approaching: but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs changed, arrived within;
And with expressive looks, his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand;
But bolder grown, at length inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wiped the sanious blood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared.
But thus to live—still lost—sequester'd still—
Scarce seem'd his lord's revenge a heavier ill.
Home! native home! O might he but repair!
He must—he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and doom'd to perish, on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands;

When lo! the self-same lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famish'd into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And soften'd by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.
Mute with astonishment the assembly gaze:
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is natural: Nature bade him rend
An enemy; she bids him spare a friend.

VI. THE THRACIAN.

THRACIAN parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But with undissembled mirth
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome, with equal scorn,
'O the savages!' exclaim,
'Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name!'

But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

VII. A MANUAL

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE.

THERE is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such,)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous it contains:
And, things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merit most regard?

Ofttimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And open'd, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamp'd behind,
Adorns its outer part;
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit: and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size,
And form'd for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes,)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

The full-charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth, supply
What their occasions ask,
Who, with a more discerning eye,
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease,
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grows less and less;
The last are least of all.

O! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss,
  Or posed, whoever reads;
No commentator's tedious gloss,
  Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
  No book is treasured there,
Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
  That may with this compare.

No!—Rival none in either host
  Of this was ever seen,
Or that contents could justly boast
  So brilliant and so keen.

VIII. AN ENIGMA.

A NEEDLE small, as small can be,
In bulk and use surpasses me,
  Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for naught,
As many of my kind are bought,
  As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost,
  The labour is not light;
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their several tasks,
  To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
  The shears another plies,
Who clips in lengths the brazen thread
For him, who, chafing every shred,
  Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob, with which it must be crown'd;
  His follower makes it fast:
And with his mallet and his file,
To shape the point, employs awhile
  The seventh and the last.

Now therefore, Œdipus! declare,
What creature, wonderful and rare,
  A process, that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado,
At last produces!—tell me true,
  And take me for your pains!

IX. SPARROWS, SELF-DOMESTICATED,

IN TRINITY-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None ever shared the social feast,
Or as an inmate or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he view'd the novel sight,)
How numerous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell,
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes,
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeather'd brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning-bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious listeners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,

Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
The expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

X. FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protuded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground,
With many a threat that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest;
It was a venial stroke;
For she that will with kittens jest,
Should bear a kitten's joke.

I. INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat, while he reigns,
In the well-shelter'd dwellings of man,

Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray,
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast.

For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing:

And shouldst thou, compell'd by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou pay'dst me before.

Thus music must needs be confess'd
To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love?

And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
Or boasts any musical powers?

XII. STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE.

THE shepherd touch'd his reed; sweet Philomel
Essay'd, and oft essay'd to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
The numbers, echoed note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon (for various was his tuneful store,)
In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and rising, as he rose,
With all the force that passion gives, inspired,
Return'd the sounds awhile, but, in the close,
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill, prevail'd. O fatal strife,
By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
And O sad victory, which cost thy life,
And he may wish that he had never won!

XIII. ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON HER BIRTH-DAY, 1728.

ANCIENT dame, how wide and vast,
To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler powers;
We, to narrow bounds confined,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,
Nourish'd but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some that waste us by degrees,
Some that suddenly destroy.

And if life o'erleap the bourn,
Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and dote, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
  Sorrow comes; and, while we groan,
Pant with anguish, and complain
  Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few, (to few 'tis given,)
  Lingering on this earthly stage,
Creep and halt, with steps uneven,
  To the period of an age,

Wherefore live they, but to see
  Cunning, arrogance, and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
  Holding their accustom'd course?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
  All that we with wonder view;
Often shall be to the last;
  Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate; content,
  Should propitious Heaven design
Life for us, as calmly spent,
  Though but half the length of thine.

XIV. THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbours furiously dispute;
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell, who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice;
No single word but has its price:
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increased expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it, may disclaim;
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

XV. THE SILK-WORM.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulberry-leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more!

For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;
Though, till his growing time be past,
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins;
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins;
Till circle upon circle wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclosed, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task:
And, though a worm, when he was lost,
Or caterpillar, at the most,
When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio-pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous; supplies
With future worms and future flies,
The next ensuing year;—and dies!
Well were it for the world, if all
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter-lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

XVI. THE INNOCENT THIEF.

Not a flower can be found in the fields,
  Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to least, but it yields
  The bee, never-wearied, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplored,
  With a diligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
  Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
  And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odour they lose,
  Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
  The canker-worm, indwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
  The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
  The pride of the garden devours;
And birds peck the seed from the bed,
  Still less to be spared than the flowers.

But she with such delicate skill,
Her pillage so fits for her use,
That the chemist in vain with his still,
Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
Neither honey nor wax would be left.

XVII. DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
No wrinkle, or deep-furrow'd frown on the brow!
Her forehead indeed is here circled around
With locks like the ribbon with which they are bound;
While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;
But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here.
Yet all is express'd with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple or freckle conceal'd from the view.

Many, fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste;
The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,

nd the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
idiculous nothing or hideous in thee.
'he nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
wonderful woman! as placid as thine.

Strange magic of art! which the youth can engage
'o peruse, half-enamour'd, the features of age;
nd force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
'hat she, when as old, shall be equally fair!
low great is the glory that Denner has gain'd,
ince Apelles not more for his Venus obtain'd!

XVIII. THE TEARS OF A PAINTER.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expired—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seized his brush, his colours spread;
And—'Oh! my child, accept,'—he said,
'('Tis all that I can now bestow,)
This tribute of a father's wo!'
Then, faithful to the two-fold part
Both of his feelings and his art,
He closed his eyes, with tender care,
And form'd at once a fellow pair;
His brow, with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew, not livid yet;
And shaded all that he had done
To a just image of his son.

Thus far is well. But view again
The cause of thy paternal pain!
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.
Again his pencil's powers he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies;
And still his cheek unfaded shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedful to the finish'd whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copied from the true.
Now, painter, cease! Thy task is done.
Long lives this image of thy son;
Nor short-lived shall thy glory prove,
Or of thy labour or thy love.

XIX. THE MAZE.

From right to left, and to and fro,
Caught in a labyrinth, you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the mystery, but in vain;
Stand still and breathe, and take from me
A clew that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you meet her,
Herself could serve you with a better.
You enter'd easily—find where—
And make, with ease, your exit there!

XX. NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE SUFFERER.

The lover, in melodious verses,
His singular distress rehearses,
Still closing with a rueful cry,
'Was ever such a wretch as I?'
Yes! thousands have endured before
All thy distress; some haply more.
Unnumber'd Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain:
And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone has lost thy wits.

XXI. THE SNAIL.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit or wall,
The Snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,
(He and his house are so combined,)
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN Wit and Genius meet their doom,
In all-devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er MURRAY'S loss the Muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee, that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

ON THE

PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, Esq

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See! with united wonder cried
The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age!

Discernment, eloquence, and grace
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise;
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest, where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

JOHN GILPIN;

Showing how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud:

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers,
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
The wine is left behind!

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, fair and softly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must,
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or naught;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he;
His fame soon spread around;
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke,
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks,
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the wash about
  On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
  Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
  From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
  To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
  They all aloud did cry;
The dinner waits, and we are tired:
  Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
  Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
  Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
  Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
  The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
  And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
  His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

What news? what news? your tidings tell?
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in:

When straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
  Thus show'd his ready wit—
My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
  That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case.

Said John, it is my wedding-day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
  And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
  I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
  For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
  For why?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
  That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein:

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry:—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
  Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
  For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
  He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
  And Gilpin, long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
  May I be there to see!

THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR,

TITHING-TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a Country Clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness of the Day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong;
The troubles of a worthy priest
The burden of my song.

The priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of the year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe
When tithing-time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,
  Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
  To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days
  Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
  Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
  The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
  He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
  Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
  Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
  And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
  And not to quit a score.

'And how does miss and madam do,
  The little boy and all?'
'All tight and well. And how do you,
  Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?'

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
  Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
  It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
  One spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
  Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
  And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
  They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins,
  'Come, neighbours, we must wag.'—
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
  Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
  And one of storms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
  By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, 'A rarer man than you
  In pulpit none shall hear;
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
  You sell it plaguy dear.'

O why are farmers made so coarse,
  Or clergy made so fine?
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
  May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
  'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum,
  Without the clowns that pay.

ON THE

QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH MARCH, 1789.

When, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign.

Then, Loyalty, with all his lamps
New-trimm'd, a gallant show!
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets or squares,
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

So fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves, on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er design'd;

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where, George recover'd made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design——
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night, except her own.

Arrived, a night-like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft portray'd
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health and heavenly aid,
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine
The night his city fell.

Soon watery grew her eyes and dim,
But with a joyful tear,
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like those in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirits cheer'd,
And through the cumberous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice,
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
Such previous wo the price!

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

I RANSACK'D, for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle, and long;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host:
Through tomes of fable and of dream,
I sought an eligible theme,
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier bard.
To modern times, with Truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied;
Here cities won and fleets dispersed
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs, and our own.
Thus, as the bee, from bank to bower,
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none, till that be found,
Where most nectareous sweets abound,
So I from theme to theme display'd
In many a page historic stray'd,
Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight,

(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view;)
Till, settling on the current year,
I found the far-sought treasure near;
A theme for poetry divine,
A theme to ennoble even mine,
In memorable eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be
An æra cherish'd long by me,
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board;
For then the clouds of eighty-eight,
That threaten'd England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of Heaven, that cried—Restore!
Chased, never to assemble more;
And far the richest crown on earth,
If valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign,
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd
Our Queen's long agitated breast,
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone;
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forego
All hope of happiness below,

Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!
O Queen of Albion, queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes that never saw thee shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,
The happiness of answer'd prayers,
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.
If they, who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that ensures respect;
But she is something more than Queen,
Who is beloved where never seen.

COWPER'S

MINOR POEMS.

PART II.

THE

MINOR POEMS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

PART THE SECOND.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone
Alexander Selkirk.

LONDON.
PRINTED FOR JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.
1816.

CONTENTS.

PART II.

	Page
Alexander Selkirk	5
The Cast-away	8
The Negro's Complaint	11
Pity for Poor Africans	13
The Morning Dream	15
The Retired Cat	17
The Love of the World Reproved	21
Mutual Forbearance	23
Love Abused	26
Pairing Time Anticipated	27
The Moralizer Corrected	30
A Fable	32
The Pine-apple and Bee	33
The Poet, the Oyster, and Sensitive Plant	35
The Nightingale and Glow-worm	37
The Dog and the Water-Lily	39
On a Spaniel	41
The Doves	43
The Faithful Bird	45
The Lily and the Rose	47
On a Goldfinch	48
The Modern Patriot	49
Report of an Adjudged Case	50
The Judgment of the Poets	52
On a Mischievous Bull	53
The Needless Alarm	55
On some Names of little note in the Biographia Britannica	60

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I. The Glow-worm 61
II. The Jackdaw 62
III. The Cricket 64
IV. The Parrot 65
V. Reciprocal Kindness 67
VI. The Thracian 68
VII. A Manual more Ancient than Printing 69
VIII. An Enigma 71
IX. Sparrows Self-domesticated 73
X. Familiarity Dangerous 74
XI. Invitation to the Redbreast 75
XII. Strada's Nightingale 76
XIII. On the Death of a Lady, who lived one hundred years 77
XIV. The Cause Won 79
XV. The Silk-worm 79
XVI. The Innocent Thief 81
XVII. Denner's Old Woman 82
XVIII. The Tears of a Painter 83
XIX. The Maze 85
XX. No Sorrow peculiar to the Sufferer 85
XXI. The Snail 86

Hymn for the use of the Sunday School at Olney 87
Stanzas on a Bill of Mortality, 1787 88
On a similar occasion, 1788 90
Another, for 1789 92
Another, for 1790 94
Another, for 1792 96
Another, for 1793 98
Inscription for a Stone on a Grove of Oak 100
Memorial for Ashley Cowper, Esq. 101
To the Memory of John Thornton, Esq. 102
To the Memory of Dr. Lloyd 104
Epitaph on Mrs. Higgins 105
..... on Mr. Hamilton 105
..... on Fop 106
..... on a Hare 106

MINOR POEMS.

PART II.

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY

ALEXANDER SELKIRK,

DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE IN THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms,
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech;
I start at the sound of my own.

The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

THE CAST-AWAY.

1799.

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom we went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
  And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
  Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
  Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
  Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives who lives an hour
  In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
  His destiny repell'd:
And ever as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
  His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
  Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him: but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
  Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
  A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
  No light propitious shone;
When snatch'd from all effectual aid,
  We perish'd each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?

Ask him, if your knotted scourges
  Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges,
  Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers—Will tornadoes
  Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
  Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
  Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
  Where his whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
  Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
  Crossing in your barks the main:
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
  To the man-degrading mart:
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
  Only by a broken heart!

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
  Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
  Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
  Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
  Ere you proudly question ours!

HYMN

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r
In Heav'n, thy dwelling place,
From infants made the public care,
And taught to seek thy face.

Thanks for thy word, and for thy day,
And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear!—But O impart
To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds engage
Of older far than we,
What hope, that at our heedless age,
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take
Under thy gracious sway,
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
A sun that ne'er declines,
And be thy mercies show'r'd on those,
Who plac'd us where it shines.

STANZAS

*Subjoined to the Yearly Bill of Mortality of the Parish of All-Saints, Northampton,**

ANNO DOMINI 1787.

Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres. Hor.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor!

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always,) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waves his claim.

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I pass'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And O! that, humble as my lot,
And scorn'd as is my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,
And ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen!

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu feruntur. Hor.

Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere timber on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
On which the press might stamp him next to die;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, Heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
In which he sports away the treasure now;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
But, naming *none*, the voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—
One falls—the rest, wide-scatter'd with affright,
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after thrift atones:
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—— *Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.*—Virg.

There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

'O most delightful hour by man
  Experienced here below,
The hour that terminates his span,
  His folly and his wo!

'Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
  Again life's dreary waste,
To see again my day o'erspread
  With all the gloomy past.

'My home henceforth is in the skies;
  Earth, seas, and sun, adieu!
All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
  I have no sight for you.'

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
  Of faith's supporting rod,
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
  The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
  Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
  To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he fear'd,
  He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frown'd or sad appear'd,
  But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
  And evil felt within;
But, when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
  And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
  Call'd up from earth to heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
  By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be *mine*, each reader cries,
  When my last hour arrives:
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
  Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

Ne commonentem recta sperne.—Buchanan.
Despise not my good counsel.

He who sits from day to day
  Where the prison'd lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
  Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
  Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None, accustom'd to the sound,
  Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I and clerk,
  Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
  And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
  Publishing to all aloud—
Soon the grave must be your home,
  And your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
Oft repeated in your ears,
Seems to sound too much in vain,
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd
Of such magnitude and weight,
Grow, by being oft impress'd,
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
Though committed every day.

Death and judgment, heaven and hell—
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell,
When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction come,
Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!
Virg.

Happy the mortal, who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And death, and roaring hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,
Man thinks he fades too soon;
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
His best concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might:

To ages in a world of pain,
To ages, where he goes
Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamour'd of its harm!
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?
Why deem we death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer wo?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
Her tale of guilt renews:
Her voice is terrible though soft,
And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared,
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compared
With the approach of death.

'Tis judgment shakes him; there's the fear
That prompts the wish to stay:
He has incurr'd a long arrear,
And must despair to pay.

Pay!—follow Christ, and all is paid;
His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where *he* was laid,
And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.
Cic. de Leg.
But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives who lives to God alone,
And all are dead beside;
For other source than God is none
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may:
To make his precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named, and no such thing,
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
An endless life above?

Who much diseased, yet nothing feel;
  Much menaced, nothing dread;
Have wounds which only God can heal,
  Yet never ask his aid?

Who deem his house a useless place;
  Faith, want of common sense;
And ardour in the Christian race,
  A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day,
  Which God asserts his own,
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,
  And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
  On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unbless'd
  With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want, uncured
  Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
  Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!
  Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
  And mercy cast away.

INSCRIPTION FOR A STONE

Erected at the sowing of a Grove of Oaks at Chillington, the Seat of T. Giffard, Esq. 1790.

OTHER stones the era tell,
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of Earth.

Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay;
But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.

Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

LINES

Composed for a Memorial of Ashley Cowper, Esq. immediately after his death, by his Nephew William, of Weston. June, 1788.

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd;
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter; and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half suppress'd,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

TO THE MEMORY

OF THE LATE

JOHN THORNTON, Esq. 1790.

Poets attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man;
And, next, commemorating Worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.
Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore.
Thee, Thornton! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.
Thee to deplore, were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.
What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing wo
By virtue suffer'd combatting below?
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.

Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable or by stealth;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And, though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thy own,
And still by motives of religious force
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course;
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat,
And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.
Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,
Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him, whose works bespeak his nature, Love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in Thee.

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD.

Our good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast.
O ye of riper age, who recollect
How once ye loved, and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
And when impair'd by time and glad to rest,
Yet still with looks, in mild complacence drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear.
In morals blameless as in manners meek,
He knew no wish that he might blush to speak;
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from One*, as made him rich indeed.
Hence then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here,
Go, garnish merit in a brighter sphere,
The brows of those whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envied not.
Light lie the turf, good Senior! on thy breast,
And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest!
Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,
And not a stone now chronicles thy name.

* He was usher and under master of Westminster near fifty years, and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a handsome pension from the King.

EPITAPHS.

ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
They, in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

ON MR. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think: a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to say—'Health here has long to reign?'
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear. Youth ofttimes, healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees;
And many a tomb, like HAMILTON'S, aloud
Exclaims, 'Prepare thee for an early shroud.'

ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

AUGUST 1792.

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders One whose bones some honour claim.
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chace—
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
'Yes,' the indignant shade of Fop replies—
'And worn with vain pursuit Man also dies.'

ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo,

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ake,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He still more aged feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

THE END.

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